

The Jonathan B. Bruen House  
250 Main Street  
Madison, Morris County, New Jersey

HABS-NJ-529

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PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
District of New Jersey

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Seymour Williams, F.A.I.A., District Officer  
133 Central Avenue, Rahway, New Jersey

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The Jonathan B. Bruen House  
250 Main Street  
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Owner: Mr. and Mrs. Charles J. Mc Kenna

Date of Erection: 1835

Architect:

Builder: Jonathan B. Bruen

Present Condition: Carefully preserved

Number of Stories: One and one-half with cellar

Materials of Construction: Foundation - stone masonry

Exterior walls - timber  
frame, clapboarded

Interior walls - lath  
and plaster on studding

Chimneys - Brick on  
inside of gable ends

Roof - gable, wood shingled,  
dormer windows are modern

Historical Data:

Chatham Township was created in 1806 from parts of Morris and Hanover Townships and the village therein known first as Bottle Hill adopted the name Madison in 1834 and was incorporated as the borough in 1889. The Morris Turnpike Road through Bottle Hill, now Main Street, Madison, was completed from Elizabethtown to Sussex in 1804. It was cut through the 142 acre farm of Jonathan Bruen which lay at the southeast end of that village and since has been

further divided by cross streets laid out in Madison.

In the distribution of the real estate of this Jonathan Bruen late of Chatham Township, deceased intestate, among his six sons and a daughter, in 1801, portion number 7 was awarded to the son Lewis Bruen. This part included a lot of four acres having some 330 feet frontage on the northeast side of the Morris Turnpike (now Main Street, Madison) and located about 1300 feet southeast of the intersecting road "from Bottle Hill Meeting house to John Ladner's farm" (today Rosedale Avenue).

This Lewis Bruen, having removed to Mobile, Alabama, gave a deed of 19 July 1826 to his mother the widow Lydia Bruen of Morris County, New Jersey, by which he released for \$100 all claim to his late father's farm and particularly to that part which had been set off to him in the division, describing this as being two lots, one of them about four acres on the northeast side of the Turnpike Road.

Lydia Bruen of Chatham Township had recently sold this four acre tract as the southeast part of 21 acres on the northeast side of that road by a deed of 2 May 1826 to Peter Francis De Rochefermoy of the same place, for \$2750, it having a frontage of 1803 feet which extended above Rosedale Avenue. In the same deed she also conveyed to him the 16 acre tract "on which the dwelling house stands" on the opposite or southwest side of the Turnpike. This would indicate that the house surveyed in 1939 had not been erected at the date of this deed of 1826, for it stands on that four acre lot on the northeast side of the road.

This P. F. De Rochefermoy, while residing in Norfolk, Virginia, and having appointed his wife Mary Jane "now at Bottle Hill, Chatham", in Morris County, New Jersey, as his attorney, conveyed by deed of 20 December 1834 to Lavielle Duberceau the same 21 acre tract on the northeast side of the turnpike in Chatham Township which he had acquired as

above stated, describing it as bounded northwest by the Genungtown Road (now Rosedale Avenue, Madison) southeast by land of Alexander Bruen, and northeast by that of V.S.R.B. Boisaubin, late Ladner.

L. Duberceau, the grantee abovesaid and his wife Melanie of Chatham Township, gave a deed of 13 February 1835 to Jonathan Bruen of the same place conveying to him for \$200.75 the original Lewis Bruen lot surveyed as 3.65 acres off the southeast end of the 21 acres acquired from De Rochefermoy, and having a frontage of 320 feet on the northeast side of the Turnpike, describing it as being bounded southeast by land of Alexander Bruen. No house is mentioned as yet being on the lot, and the amount of the consideration money certainly precludes it. This fact and an examination of the design and details of the house now on this lot indicate its erection in this same year 1835. The last named was the father of this Jonathan B. Bruen and later conveyed to him 25 feet additional frontage to this lot.

This Jonathan Bruen, by his will of 15 June 1874, proved 8 September 1884, devised to his son Benjamin F. Bruen "my Homestead wherein I now reside", in Chatham Township, containing four acres.

Benjamin F. Bruen who thus received the house here considered owned and occupied it in 1910 according to the Atlas of Morris County published in that year, it being indicated on the map therein as being at number 250 Main Street in the borough of Madison. He died on 26 October 1924 having devised his real estate to his widow Anna Ross Bruen for life and afterwards to Edith M. Clapp and George B. Magie. Accordingly, by their deed of 20 October 1934, the two last named heirs, being respectively of Ontario, Canada, and Lake County, Florida, conveyed to Arthur V. Bertrand of Madison, New Jersey, the same premises in that place, being the house here considered.

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Finally, by deed of 31 December 1936, the executors of the estate of A. V. Bertrand deceased conveyed the same to Charles J. Mc Kenna and wife Irene D., the present owners, 1939.

The design of this house bears a remarkable similarity to that of the former homestead of Col. William Brittin in the same borough, as shown by a photograph of the latter taken before its remodeling and reproduced in Wm. P. Tuttle's "Bottle Hill and Madison", published 1917, page 147, and therein described as having been the first house erected on the Morris Turnpike which had been opened in 1804.

Bibliography:

A search of Land and Probate records in Essex County by Cornelius Mc Phillips, H.A.B.S. title abstractor

Laurie D. Cook  
Supervising Historian

Approved:

Seymour Williams  
SEYMOUR WILLIAMS, F.A.I.A.  
District Officer

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